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# MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of  
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #23  
October 31, 1975

COORDINATED PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM TO BEGIN SECOND YEAR.....This year's system will be Department-wide and be implemented by two letters agencies will be receiving shortly. First letter will provide basic policy background underlying recent FY 1977 program and budget decisions. Second will describe specific system for monitoring and reporting on objectives we will be using in FY 1976. Special briefing will be given to Management Council prior to implementing 1976 system. (Contact: Steve Dewhurst, OMF, ext. 76176)

FS PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO PUBLIC COMMENT.....Resources Planning Act requires FS long-range planning on future forest and rangeland resources and environmental factors. FS is required to submit to Congress Renewable Resources Assessment of nation -- factors affecting use, ownership and management of forest, range and related lands -- and FS Renewable Resources Program -- needs/opportunities inventory of public/private program investment; anticipated results/benefits of FS programs; cost-benefit ratios; personnel requirements. FS's draft natural resources inventory and assessment and draft environmental statement were released August 15; Oct. 15 was deadline for written comments to Washington. (Contact: FS Washington Office of Information, ext. 76957)

PHOTOCOMPOSITION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO COMM.....They are (1) establishment by COMM of regularly scheduled meetings with agencies' printing and composition officers, and other interested parties to discuss problems, clarify procedures, and disseminate information with regard to printing and composition; and (2) establishment of Departmental system to handle composition with agencies providing input to system and Department producing output or camera-ready copy. Task Force was established as result of concern expressed by Council. (Contact: J.P. Bolduc, SEC, ext. 77247)

CORRECTION.....In last issue, item discussing legislative proposal to upgrade several USDA management positions should have read:  
"The October 9 proposal contained language to upgrade the position of Under Secretary of Agriculture to Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; to provide for two additional Assistant Secretaries of Agriculture at Executive Level IV;...."

JOHN KEANEY ON EXTENDED LEAVE.....John Keaney, Director, OO, suffered recurrence of heart attack symptoms on October 14, was hospitalized, and is now at home for indefinite period. George Knapp will be Acting Director in his absence. (Contact: George Knapp, OO, ext. 73937)

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INFORMATION RETRIEVAL FOR SECRETARY OA OBJECTIVE.....Prototype system being developed by OA will enable Secretary's office to quickly identify and locate reports concerning USDA activities. Centralized system will catalog reports from GAO and OA audits; program and operational reviews made by OMF's Operations Review and Analysis Staff, former Office of Planning and Evaluation, and individual agencies; and studies made by outside consultants. Previously, agencies had to be canvassed individually when this kind of management information was needed. Will provide Secretary with current inventory of reports and studies and tell where copies may be obtained. The prototype system, with initial inventory of reports covering first quarter of fiscal year 1976, will be ready November 15, 1975. At that time, OA also will present recommendations on future responsibilities for gathering data and operating the system. (Contact: William Forsythe, OA, ext. 74646)

PURCHASING AND THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE.....As a USDA executive, you:

CAN

- ... determine needs and arrange for purchases of goods and services necessary for accomplishment of your programs.
- ... discuss plans and needs with vendors, trade associations, and others outside Government to help define your requirements in relation to capabilities of industry.
- ... make preliminary informal inquiries concerning price or other factors.
- ... contract for services of workers or specialists to perform specifically defined tasks
- ... talk to contractors re work currently in progress.
- ... use procurement regulations to best advantage to make your purchase.

CANNOT

- ... arrange for purchase of Christmas cards, customized ashtrays, trinkets, gifts, or items of extravagant quality or price.
- ... give inside information to one or a few firms and exclude other firms from that information.
- ... make commitments for Government purchases without going through open, competitive process.
- ... contract for undefined services or persons to work under supervision of Federal employees or to supervise Federal employees.
- ... change work called for by contract or increase or decrease that work or contract price without going through formal procedures.
- ... sidestep regulations because your situation is "special" or "different."



USDA SHARED NETWORK RESULTS IN SAVINGS.....Wideband network reconfiguration will result in an annualized cost savings of approximately \$37,000 and will provide one additional link (to FCCC) and redundancy of 3 of 6 communications links. (See Issue #22 - Contact: H.W. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

ADS HAS MINOR REORGANIZATION.....Effective October 29, Program Modification Office (PMO) was eliminated because of cancellation of USDA's major ADP procurement. PMO staff members were placed within remaining Headquarters organizational elements. Additionally, Standards and Security Division was established to provide emphasis to both Standards area and to Privacy Act as it affects data processing. (Contact: H.W. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

DID YOU KNOW THAT ARS HAS:

- ... Developed integrated pest control program that may eventually eliminate boll weevil as economic threat to cotton.
- ... Computerized food value information in Nutrient Data Bank that will be quick and reliable source for dieticians, teachers and members of medical profession.
- ... Made more-nutritious chips from unpeeled potatoes; thus eliminating waste disposal problem and lowering consumer costs.
- ... Used whey, a cheese-making by-product, to improve nutritional value of foods.
- ... Developed Arc alfalfa -- new variety resistant to fungus disease that damages more than 4 million acres of alfalfa annually.
- ... Increased beef production by using hormone injections to increase multiple births in beef cattle.
- ... Made candy from corn syrup and non-fat dry milk that is appealing, nutritionally balanced and protein rich.
- ... Made biodegradable plastics from cornstarch.
- ... Made highly nutritious soy protein enriched bread without sugar that may save as much as 1,500 pounds of sugar per 10,000 one-pound loaves.
- ... Developed new process to flameproof wool that is economical, easy to apply, non-irritating and won't wash out after 10 washings.
- ... Brought hybrid soybeans one step closer by developing line with male sterile character.
- ... Developed experimental soybean combine that uses compressed air and floating cutter bars to help reduce harvesting losses.
- ... Developed ways to control insect pests without using insecticides.
- ... Begun energy research to use solar heat to replace fossil fuels for drying agricultural crops and to turn agricultural wastes into energy.
- ... Monitored basic life processes of plants to improve screening crops for higher productivity and to improve crop management systems.
- ... Developed "super slurper" -- starch based compound that can absorb as much as 2,000 times its own weight -- for use in disposable diapers or kitty litters, or even as soil conditioners or seed coatings.
- ... Developed sewage sludge composing techniques to permit this valuable waste to be used as soil conditioner and fertilizer on lawns, parks and around trees.

AGENCIES REMINDED ABOUT UNAUTHORIZED RELEASE OF OI REPORTS.....Agency Heads are reminded not to release OI reports of investigation under Freedom of Information Act without prior clearance from OI. Secretary's Memorandum No. 1845, dated July 23, 1974, states, in part, that OI reports of investigation will not be reproduced and that agencies will destroy reports after they have served their purpose. (Contact: L. L. Free, OI, ext. 76915)

USDA PARTICIPATION IN MINORITY BANK PROGRAM DECREASES SINCE 1972.....Program helps minority banks by increasing deposits from both Federal and private sectors. USDA participation in program follows:

USDA BANK DEPOSITS IN CITIES WHERE  
MINORITY BANKS ARE LOCATED, FY 1972-75  
(Millions of Dollars)

	FY 1972	FY 1973	FY 1974	FY 1975
Total USDA Deposits	\$33.1	\$23.5	\$24.2	\$27.4
USDA Minority Bank Deposits	\$ 3.8	\$ 3.6	\$ 2.2	\$ 1.5
Minority Bank Percentage of Total	11.5%	15%	9%	5%

Number of minority-owned banks in program has increased from 31 to more than 70. Secretary's Memorandum 1704, Revised, states "USDA agencies will make all reasonable efforts to maintain the present level of deposits with these institutions and to place further deposits with them wherever possible." President also has recently reiterated support of this important program. OEO is responsible for distributing updated rosters of financial institutions qualifying as minority-owned banks. (Contact: J. Fred King, OEO, ext. 77117)

HIGHLIGHTS OF OCTOBER 31 COUNCIL MEETING.....

SECRETARY PRAISES COUNCIL.....In surprise visit, he thanked Council for work they are doing. He noted meetings provide a forum to give agencies opportunity to participate in decision-making process. Meetings also are opportunity for agencies to exchange ideas and to improve relationship between Office of Secretary and agencies.

AGENCIES MUST COORDINATE ALL ADP PROCUREMENT WITH ADS.....This is result of language contained in conference report on USDA appropriations bill. ADS is seeking clarification of that language with Congressional Committees.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROGRESS.....Tom Gill, OP, discussed Department's Executive and Managerial Training System. Noted that McManis Study recommendations have been implemented. From Council discussion of presentation, System appears to have strong agency support and commitment.